Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace paragraph [0025] with the following amended paragraph:

[0025] As shown in FIG. 5, the carrier layer is cut to conform to the desired peripheral size and shape of the finished coating blanket 100. Since the carrier layer 30 is somewhat rigid, the knife cuts through it by way of multiple passes over the same line of cut. In order to prevent the coating blanket 100.from separating from the coating blanket material 23, rather than cutting a sustained line, intermittent slits 54 are cut into the carrier layer, providing for easy separation of the coating blanket from the coating blanket material upon removal from the cutting apparatus 10. These intermittent slits 54 are cut around the periphery of the coating blanket in a particular order. Initially, a first pair of opposed lateral edges 56 that are spaced apart relative to one another and extend approximately perpendicular to a longitudinal axis defined by the cutting apparatus roller are cut. Upon completion of the cutting operation, with respect to the first pair of lateral edges 56, a second pair of lateral edges 58, which together with the first pair of lateral edges coact to define the periphery of the coating blanket 100, are cut in much the same way with a plurality of intermittent slits being cut through the carrier layer 30 along each of the edges comprising the second pair of lateral edges. The second pair of lateral edges extend approximately parallel to the longitudinal roller axis and are cut after the first pair of lateral edges to prevent the coating blanket from separating from the coating blanket material due to the bowing of the material as it is fed through the cutting apparatus 10 as shown in FIG. 4.

Please replace paragraph [0026] with the following amended paragraph:

[0026] Upon completion of the cutting operation, the coating blanket material 23 is then removed from the cutting apparatus 10, and the coating blanket 100 separated along the intermittent slits in the first and second pairs of opposed lateral edges. Once separated, the coating blanket can then be punched or otherwise cut in accordance with a mounting pin pattern unique to a rotating drum on a printing press (not shown) upon which the coating blanket will be mounted. While the above-described embodiments of the present invention have incorporated a sprocket-type drive system for moving the coating blanket material 23 back and forth through the cutting apparatus 10, the present invention is not limited in this regard. Other types of drive systems known to those skilled in the pertinent art to which the invention pertains, such as a friction or grit wheel-type drive, can be employed without departing from the broader aspects of the present invention.